



## **Office of the Mayor**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

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*Contact: Mikki Dobski, Dir of Communications & Special Projects, 235-5855 or 876-1564  
Jeff Gibney, Director of Community and Economic Development, 235-9375  
Paul Meyer, Chair, DTSB Board, 237-9201*

### **City to provide new executive leadership for DTSB**

The City of South Bend today announced it would provide two staff, leaders of the City Plan process, as interim executive leadership for Downtown South Bend Inc., a public-private partnership created in 2002 to promote the downtown area.

Marco Mariani, the city's assistant director of community development, will serve as interim DTSB executive director, while city planner Jitin Kain will assist him in the day-to-day management of DTSB.

"The City of South Bend is dedicated to moving forward in this partnership with the business community to strengthen our downtown," said Jeff Gibney, director of the city's Community and Economic Development department, whose staff include Mariani and Kain. "We are committed to creating a vibrant, exciting and diverse downtown that serves as a destination throughout the region for people to work, play, live and shop."

Mariani and Kain will join existing DTSB staffers Shannan Schmidt, project development manager; Robin Slutsky, marketing and development coordinator; and Chris Culver, ambassador supervisor. Mariani and Kain will be accountable to both the DTSB board and Gibney.

"We're deeply grateful for this very tangible show of support for DTSB and its mission by the city," said Paul Meyer, chair of the DTSB board. "Having 'known people,' such as Marco and Jitin, with their background, knowledge and expertise join DTSB in these interim positions will go far in helping DTSB continue its programs and initiatives without hesitation or interruption."

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Mariani, 38, joined the city in March 1993 as a neighborhood planner. In his time with the city, Mariani has served as program manager for the commercial corridors program as well as managing the city's neighborhood partnership centers and annexation program. He has worked to develop new housing in the Southeast neighborhood, including the new Southeast Park, managed several neighborhood planning processes, and served on the management team of City Plan. He was named the assistant director of community development in 2002.

"We're at such a crucial and an exciting point for the downtown. It's important to deepen the relationship between DTSB and our department, as well as the city council," Mariani said. "Working very closely with small-business owners in the downtown is going to be important for DTSB as we move forward. ... Completing a physical development plan that is built by the downtown community is also essential. I look forward to working with the downtown community, learning more and helping to contribute to the good work DTSB has already done."

A native of Bloomington, Ill., Mariani received a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, where he also received a bachelor's degree in sociology. He has been involved in community organizations, serving as program manager for Rebuilding Together (formerly Christmas in April) and as program manager for the Neighborhood Resources Corp. He and his wife, Eileen, live in South Bend with their two children, Leena and Vian.

Among his responsibilities will be finding a permanent successor for his role.

Kain, 31, joined the City of South Bend in August 2002 as a city planner hired primarily to work full-time on the management team of City Plan, a 20-year plan for the future growth and development of the city.

A native of New Delhi, India, Kain received a bachelor's degree in architecture from the Indian Institute of Technology in Roorkee, India. He worked for two years as an architect in India, before attending Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., where he received a master's degree in urban and regional planning. He is a member of the Indiana Planning Association, has worked with Rebuilding Together and serves on the executive committee of 'BASSS, the 'Bend Area Service / Sports / Social Club.

He and his wife, Jean DeWinter, live in South Bend.

"I've always been interested in downtown," said Kain, whose master's thesis focused on downtown revitalization. "A big part of my work in City Plan was in engaging the public. This really reinforces what we've heard about the downtown, so I'm excited to work [with DTSB]."

DTSB's work is overseen by a 28-member board while its offices are shared with the Notre Dame School of Architecture and Community Relations office. The majority of DTSB's budget comes from the city, supplemented by voluntary contributions from businesses.

Since its founding, DTSB has started a beautification project that added flowers, benches and trash receptacles to the downtown area. Its façade grant program has assisted with business renovations, while it has organized special events in the downtown area. DTSB's Ambassador program has placed a group of workers, in red shirts and jackets, in the downtown to clean streets and sidewalks, water flowers, help visitors find businesses and attractions, and serve as a positive presence in the community.